

Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel

*Recommendation to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
to restore at least \$10,000 to each of the regional panels*

The Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel requests that the ANS Task Force restore at least \$10,000 to each of the regional panels to bring them to the original \$50,000 in annual support and work to identify and secure additional and dedicated sources of support.

The amount of \$50,000 previously authorized by the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (Subtitle D-Authorizations and Appropriation, Sec. 1301(b)(6))¹, and allocated through the US Fish and Wildlife Services's budget. The panels' spending power has been eroded as a result of inflation over the last twenty-five years. ***In inflationary terms, \$90,708.11 would be required today to have the same spending power as did \$50,000 in 1990***². The recent 20% reduction (amounting to a cut of \$10,000 to each regional panel's allocation) to \$40,000 annually has been especially crippling to the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel's productivity.

While other programs have seen increases, the Panels were flat funded and then reduced. The Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force recognizes at each of its semi-annual meetings the enormous body of work and products that the regional panels provide and their importance in the Task Force's annual and decadal accomplishments, which were recently detailed in the Task Force's Report to Congress. Consistently supporting the regional approaches of the Panels to implement the work of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force should be a priority.

The panels are expected to operate multi-state (and often multi-national) organizations, which involve travelling to two Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force meetings and two regional panel meetings each year, convening and hosting two regional panel meetings, convening and hosting conference calls, paying staff or contractors to manage activities, and the administrative cost of and indirect costs to host a panel. Consequently, these services have been cut and there is no funding remaining to fund the projects that have been deemed by the Task Force as so valuable and meaningful.

The Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel has a long history of maximizing its funding to provide a host of program services and produce products to initiate and foster communication, cooperation, and collaboration in the Northeast United States and Canada. At this time and under the current reduced funding level, the services and products can no longer be produced, maintained, or updated. These services and products include but are not limited to those in the following list (see <http://northeastans.org/resources.html> for further information).

- Semi-annual meetings that provide opportunities to connect and collaborate with partner states and provinces on agenda items providing perspectives on emerging species and issues, training and other skill building opportunities;

¹ <http://www.epw.senate.gov/envlaws/nanpca90.pdf>

² <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>

- Hosting Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force meetings including providing field tours at invasive species early detection and removal demonstration sites;
- Active committees and work groups that meet to collaborate on cost-effective regional projects, programs, and products;
- Maintenance of a forum and listserve to share news, perspectives, and to act as a public platform for enquiries;
- Rapid response workshops with presenters from other disciplines to provide perspectives on command models and other approaches;
- Workshops that train citizen scientists in invasive species identification;
- Rapid Assessment Surveys on floating docks and rocky shores in New England;
- Rapid response grant funding to help provide support to address new infestations quickly;
- Hydrilla Initiative Pilot that created a template for multi-disciplinary approaches to invasive species early detection, rapid response, and management including literature search, social marketing, workshop, and survey;
- Production and distribution of products such as a floating key chain with contact information and QR code to online survey for behavior change metric information collection;
- *NEANS Panel Resource Digest* published online and through listserve and website distribution (no longer published due to funding cuts);
- Online Guide that dynamically produces customized and up-to-the-minute guides for field and other invasive species identification and outreach efforts;
- Chinese Mitten Crab posters for outreach at access and other sites;
- Chinese Mitten Crab early detection and rapid response plan for the northeast region;
- Watch cards for many invasive animal and plant species including hydrilla, water chestnut, and Asian clams (these efforts have included offering buy-in opportunities where the Panel offered low price purchase to other organizations) with some produced in both English and the French;
- Ability to buy-in on watch cards produced by other organizations;
- Legislative matrices comparing federal, state, provincial, and other regulatory tools;
- Best practices for decontamination of gear to circumvent the spread of Didymo; and
- Co-hosting of the International Didymo Conference 2013 in Rhode Island that brought together experts from North America, South America, Europe, New Zealand, and Australia, whose participants continue to collaborate and produce white papers and other tools.

There have been General Accounting Office reviews (two within the last year), grant reporting, Reports to Congress, and other requirements where a considerable amount of additional work has been required and the Panel funding has been stagnated and then reduced.

Restoring full funding for the six regional panels to last year's level will cost a total of only \$60,000 nationally. The Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel recommends that the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force identify and secure \$60,000 to restore this funding and work within the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies to identify and secure additional and dedicated sources of support so that the panels may continue to provide the high level and high quality services and products for which they were tasked by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.

Recommendation to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force discussed and voted on unanimously during the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel's March 2, 2016 conference call.

Prepared by Michele L. Tremblay, contractor to the Panel